

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE MULTICHANNEL VIDEO COMPETITION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 1997

HON. BRIAN P. BILBRAY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 30, 1998

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lend my support to H.R. 2921, the Multichannel Video Competition and Consumer Protection Act of 1997. This Act, which I cosponsored earlier this year, will allow the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to conduct an inquiry into competition in the multichannel video market. I agree with my colleague, Representative BILLY TAUZIN, whose goal with respect to video markets, is to create a policy environment that encourages vigorous competition. This will provide consumers with a choice of providers, new services, and competitive rates. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Representative TAUZIN for his leadership on this issue, and I look forward to working with him in the future to enact this bill into law.

A recent action by the Library of Congress flies in the face of these goals. The Library of Congress has upheld a decision of the Copyright Arbitration Rate Panel, which dramatically increases the price that Director-To-Home (DTH) satellite television companies pay in copyright fees. At the moment cable operators pay an average of 9.7 cents per subscriber for superstations, and 2.5 cents for network stations. DTH companies, on the other hand, have been paying an average of 27 cents per subscriber for both signals since the Library of Congress decision came into effect on January 1 1998. At these rates, the satellite service providers will be paying 275 percent and 900 percent more respectively for the very same signals.

In the short term, this has a detrimental impact on America's 7.5 million satellite subscribers. For example, in my home state of California, these costs have already been passed on to consumers through DTH subscription increases. Strangely enough, cable subscribers could suffer too. In the year between July 1996 and July 1997, we witnessed cable rates increase at nearly 4 times the rate of inflation. In order to remedy this situation we must listen to some sensible advice from the FCC. They have told us that the most effective regulator of cable rates is more robust competition from satellite television services.

Let's create an environment in which the satellite television industry can compete, not one where their competitiveness is reduced. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation, and help create a better multichannel video market for consumers.

HONORING MONTGOMERY'S HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 30, 1998

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute to an outstanding organization that is building lives as it builds homes for the needy in my congressional district in central Alabama. I'm speaking about the Montgomery, Alabama Habitat for Humanity. I would like to enter into the RECORD this recent editorial in The Montgomery Advertiser honoring our local volunteers' selfless efforts.

For sheer effectiveness, few charitable undertakings rival the work of Habitat for Humanity. The Montgomery chapter of that organization will soon begin its most ambitious project yet, a neighborhood of perhaps as many as 50 homes built the Habitat way—with donated money, materials and labor in what can only be described as the spirit of love.

Habitat enjoys such wide support and admiration because it accomplishes its stated mission without a lot of frills or fanfare. It puts in decent housing people who are willing to work and be responsible homeowners, but who would never qualify for a mortgage from a conventional lender.

Its most famous volunteer worker is former President Jimmy Carter, who is a pretty fair carpenter, but anyone who can drive a nail or carry some lumber or make sandwiches for lunch or do any of scores of other necessary tasks can find a way to help with a Habitat project.

Montgomery Habitat for Humanity envisions a neighborhood off the Alabama River Parkway, near North Pass neighborhood. The land is in hand, foreclosed property donated by Troy Bank and Trust.

Habitat officials favor the idea of creating neighborhoods over building individual houses scattered around a community. Montgomery Habitat built Litchfield, a 16-home neighborhood near Maxwell Air Force Base. Now it's looking at a project three times that size.

Habitat is not some no-strings giveaway program. Those for whom Habitat homes are built make monthly payments on their homes, with the money going into a revolving account that helps pay for building other homes. They also are required to invest 400 hours of "sweat equity" on their homes and others.

Habitat founded by former Montgomerian Millard Fuller 22 years ago, has built homes from the start, but by building neighborhoods it also builds lives. It builds a sense of community and gives hard-working, low-income people a stake in their neighborhood that rental property or government-subsidized housing cannot provide.

Habitat is effective, which makes it especially appealing to those people who can contribute their time and labor and those whose contributions can only be financial. The proposed new neighborhood is an exciting prospect for Habitat and for Montgomery.

RECOGNIZING BARBARA WHEELER

HON. HARRIS W. FAWELL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 30, 1998

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce to the Speaker and my associates in the House a prominent resident of the 13th Illinois Congressional District, prominent in terms of public service and professional accomplishments. Barbara M. Wheeler was recently elected President of the National School Boards Association, a nationwide advocacy organization comprised of 95,000 local school board members governing 15,000 local school districts.

Even before taking her law degree, Barbara Wheeler became actively involved in her local public school system, serving as a school board member, school board president, and chair of several school board advisory committees. She has been a member of the board of directors of the Illinois Association of School Boards and has held the office of president. More recently, she served as Secretary-Treasurer of the National School Boards Association, the organization she will now lead. She continues to speak on the challenges facing public education to conferences across the country. For more than 12 years, she has been a valuable member of my Congressional District Advisory Committee.

Barbara Wheeler, as President of the National School Boards Association, will be a vigorous, knowledgeable and articulate advocate of the interests of that organization and local school boards. I expect she will testify before Congress and represent the Association in many of its relationships with the executive branch of the federal government. I respectfully ask my colleagues in this House to join me in congratulating Barbara and wishing her well as she carries out her new responsibilities.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

HON. BOB FRANKS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 30, 1998

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the citizens of Franklin Township on their bicentennial celebration. The history, tradition, and values which have made Franklin into a leader in New Jersey, exemplify the values upon which our great nation has risen. Since its incorporation in 1798, Franklin has continued to prosper as a business and industrial leader, while maintaining its rural sense of community.

Today, I join my colleagues and fellow citizens of New Jersey in extending our congratulations to the citizens of Franklin Township.

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